Kazipet and Bombay via Chandrapur;

(b) whether it is also a fact that recently more than two dozen M.L.As from vidarbha submitted a memorandum to the Prime Minister in this regard; and

(c) if so, what is the reaction of Government thereto and action being taken thereon?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE DEPARTMENT OF RAILWAYS (SHRI MADHAVRAO SCINDIA): (a) to (c) Direct B.G. rail link from Kazipet to Bombay exists via Secunderabad and Wadi. Demands have been received for B.G. rail links traversing these areas via Chandrapur. Conversion of Manmad-Aurangabad-Parli Vaijnath and new line between Adilabad and Pimpalkutti are aproved and being progressed according to availability of resources. Conversion of Parbhani-Adilabad MG line into BG is also aproved but is not being progressed at present due to severe constraint of resources. With completion of these projects, direct B.G. line between Bombay and Chandrapur will be available. Direct route exists between Chandrapur and Kazipet.

Coastal Transport

947. SHRI CHIMANBHAI MEHTA: Will the Minister of TRANSPORT be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are considering any scheme to develop and expand coastal transport in view of (i) its economical cost of operation and (ii) a long coastal line if so, what are the details thereof;

(b) whether it is a fact that sea-transport would cost less than 30 per cent of the cost of road-transport;

(c) what are the causes for the insignificant or almost nil growth of this transport; and

(d) whether Government have worked out any plan or scheme to link ports of Saurashtra and Gujarat with Bombay and other ports of India for cargo and passenger traffic and whether any survey, has been done and whether any proposal for survey has been received?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE DEPARTMENT OF SURFACE TRANSPORT (SHRI RAJESH PILOT): (a) Coordination of coastal operation, modernisation of coastal fleet, improvement of port facilities, rationalisation of custom & port procedure for fixation/revision of freitht rates etc. are some of the steps being taken to develop coastal shipping. Also specific proposals to start cargo/passenger service on certain routes have been suggested by some shipping companies.

(b) Coastal shipping has coast advantage on long leads and for bulk haulage where cargo traffic is available for both directions.

(c) the main causes are competition from rail and road transport, imbalance in traffic in two directions of Indian Coast, congestion at ports, Custom Law Constraints, higher handling costs at ports due to double/multiple handling heavy investment on ships, increasing operating costs, etc.

(d) Mogul Line Ltd. and Govt. of Gujarat got prepared in 1982 an economic feasibility report through a consultancy firm for introduction of a Passenger-cum-Cargo Ro-Ro Ferry Service from Jafrabad to New Mangalore via Bombay & Mormugao. Detailed Project Report from the shipping Corporation of India (following merger of MLL with SCI) is awaited.